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Environment Department to Offer Free Water Testing in Northern and Southern New Mexico

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau will offer water testing for free to area residents during events in the communities of Las Cruces and El Rito. The **El Rito** Water Fiesta will be held on **Saturday May 1**, at the Northern New Mexico Community College in El Rito from 10 am – 3 pm. The **Dona Ana** Water Fiesta will be held on **Saturday, May 8** at the Downtown Mall in Las Cruces from 8 am – 12 pm.

Private well water samples brought to these events will receive free testing for pH, nitrates, conductivity, sulfate, iron, and fluoride. In order to be tested, samples must be at least one quart in volume, freshly drawn from a cold water tap, and brought in a covered, clean glass or plastic container that did not previously contain pickles or juice.

These events are the result of efforts begun by the Richardson Administration to address New Mexico's water future. These efforts include the development and promotion of comprehensive, community-wide drought planning and water conservation actions to secure and extend community water systems in New Mexico. These events are components of the state's Drought and Water Conservation pilot project spearheaded by the State of New Mexico Drought Task Force.

Organizations involved in this effort include the Environment Department's Drinking Water Bureau, the New Mexico Environmental Finance Center, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, and the New Mexico Rural Water Association.

In addition to free water testing, planned activities at these events include interactive ground water models, video presentations, distribution of outreach materials, question and answer interaction with the public, and program specific information that represent local issues such as watershed protection, surface water and ground water quality information.

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